

Pac-12 Conference Basketball Media Day

Wednesday, October 26, 2022
San Francisco, California, USA

USC Trojans

Coach Andy Enfield

Boogie Ellis

Drew Peterson

Men's Head Coach



JESSE HOOKER: We're happy to welcome to the stage USC head coach Andy Enfield and student-athletes Boogie Ellis and Drew Peterson.

ANDY ENFIELD: It's a new season. My tenth in the Pac-12 at USC. Excited to be here in year ten with the Trojans. Two all conference guards with me, Boogie Ellis and Drew Peterson. They'll be the leaders of our team this year. They've had outstanding careers so far, and we're looking forward to them leading our group of sophomores and freshmen.

We have a very young team, and we'll really rely on the experience of these two guys.

Q. Curious what Kobe Johnson did to earn a team captain spot for you.

ANDY ENFIELD: Kobe leads by example. Drew, Boogie, and Kobe are three tri-captains. Kobe shows up every day and competes in the defensive end. He makes plays for his teammates and has a tremendous work ethic, and he's also a great teammate.

Q. What's the latest with Vince since we last talked?

ANDY ENFIELD: Vince Iwuchukwu is doing very well. He had a great summer. He looks great. Riding the bike about 45 minutes a day. Extremely energetic. Big part of our program, our team. He shows up at every practice. He's a cheerleader, and we're really happy for him.

Q. Is he clear to do anything yet practice-wise?

ANDY ENFIELD: He's not clear to practice. He's clear to do minimal exercise. We have to monitor his heart rate not to get it over a certain number, but he's doing very well.

Q. Still optimistic he could play this season at some point?

ANDY ENFIELD: Yes, I think everybody's very hopeful, especially Vince.

Q. Boogie, you got to play with LeBron and DeMar DeRozan in the Drew League. I was standing courtside filming you. Also, I saw some alumni from USC came and practiced with you guys. Did you get any tidbits from these pros? How was it playing with that electric -- electricity in the gym was amazing? You couldn't fit one more person in there. How was it playing that game?

BOOGIE ELLIS: It was a great game. It was a great experience too. A lot of people are not going to be able to say that they play with LeBron or played next to him. It was a great atmosphere, a great game.

Then I felt like playing with pros is always a good thing, watching how they approach, watching how the things that they do ultimately.

Q. Andy, earlier the commissioner said that he talked to anyone in the UCLA or USC community that was, quote, in favor of the move to the Big Ten. I think it's only fair to ask the coaches from USC and UCLA if they have a response to that.

ANDY ENFIELD: This is my tenth year in the Pac-12. It's been an outstanding league. A lot of great teams, great coaches, great players. A lot of players have gone on to play in the NBA. It's been a tremendous experience for myself, my team in the Pac-12. We have two more years before the transition.

We haven't really thought about what the transition means. It's two years away. The Big Ten is another power conference. They have outstanding teams as well. That will be something that we'll think about more so in the next year and a half, two years. Right now we're focused on our season ahead and the outstanding conference that we're in.



Q. How have the rest of the freshmen developed so far through the preseason? Who stood out from that group?

ANDY ENFIELD: Our two big guys are out right now, Vince as we talked about and Iaroslav, who we signed late in the summer, and he started school in September. So they're out. Iaroslav should be back this week.

The other three have had great training camps. Tre White is a 6'6" guard. He does everything. He rebounds, he passes, and he defends. He's really going to be a special player. Oziyah Sellers is an elite shooter at 6'4". He's the best shooter in our program, one of the best shooters I've ever coached, and that includes the NBA as well.

And then Kijani Wright from Los Angeles, McDonald's All-American. He's 6'9", 235 pounds. He's meant a lot to our team with his physicality, his athleticism. He's learning our defensive system.

So we expect all three of those guys really with Iaroslav and Vince when he can get back, to help our team this year, and we think they have a very bright future ahead of them.

Q. Is Oziyah an even better shooter than you thought when you recruited him?

ANDY ENFIELD: He actually is. I did not realize and our staff did not realize how good a shooter he is off the move. He relocates, he can put the ball on the floor, and he doesn't turn the ball over.

He's a very smart basketball player. I know Boogie and Drew are outstanding shooters as well, but to see a freshman walk in the door and have that type of accuracy and confidence to do it not only in our drills, but our actual live situations is pretty special.

Q. Can he shoot with that guy from Johns Hopkins, Andy, or no?

ANDY ENFIELD: I always tell him, no matter where we go, he'll be the second best shooter in the gym no matter where we are. He didn't know who I was talking about, but I reminded him. Thank you, P.J.

Q. Drew, you're like one of the elder statesmen. I'm thinking back. You're kind of part of the modern college basketball scene. You've had so many teammates come in and out, some stay a while, some not. New guys come in, Boogie, of course, like that. How challenging has that been for you? And how

different is this year going to be compared to the vastly different teams you've played on?

DREW PETERSON: Yeah, it's funny. It feels like only my third year because obviously I transferred. But as a fifth year senior guy, I'm now one of the old guys. It's cool kind of getting to embrace one of the older roles and use my experience.

Coach Enfield's helped me trying to bring a more vocal role to the team and helping everybody make a jump. We need a lot of sophomores to make a jump, not only freshmen.

So everybody is going to have to embrace a bigger role with the pieces we lost this season. So I try to help in any way I can. It's cool to be able to help the guys, guys like Tre, Oziyah, Kijani, who just got here, they're fast learners. Especially Kijani's improved a lot over this summer. Oziyah and Tre, are almost ready from the jump. It's cool to be able to help in any way I can.

BOOGIE ELLIS: Definitely since I've been in college, I've been a part of a lot of different teams. I would definitely say that this is -- like this year is probably one of my favorite teams, especially because we have a lot of guys and a lot of guards who could do a bunch of the same thing. I feel like whoever gets the ball can make decisions, and I'm allowed to play off the ball, play on the ball, and play wherever Coach needs me to play.

Q. My question is similar to P.J.'s, but I'm going to ask it anyways for both of the players, Boogie and Drew. You guys are seniors. What have you learned over the course of your college careers, if you had to summarize it? What would you tell your freshman self or just describe the basketball and the off-court journey that you guys have made over the last four or five years?

BOOGIE ELLIS: Something that I would tell myself as a freshman is definitely just like trusting the process. Just coming in every day and having the same approach. I feel like as a freshman I was kind of focused on like the wrong things.

So like just going throughout my college experience, just trusting the process and realizing that everybody has their own growth and everybody has their own journey. So that's something that I would tell myself.

DREW PETERSON: Yeah, I agree with Boogie from the aspect of freshman year was probably the hardest for me. You don't really know what to expect, and you come in thinking you're a big shot, and you kind of get a reality check pretty early on.

Other than that, I'd say the biggest kind of thing I experienced and would tell myself is just routine and durability and understanding how long a college season really is. That's what I try to tell the younger guys, that you really need to take care of your body. You really need to pick and choose when you're going to eat the right things and get enough sleep with the long road trips and some nights you're coming back after a conference game at 1:00 in the morning.

Just being able to really get into a routine, I think that's something I just learned with growing up and maturity. Most of my friends now my age are already graduated and working real jobs. So it's cool to be able to kind of incorporate some of the things I've learned as I've matured, as a fifth year senior now.

Q. To the student-athletes, Drew and Boogie, what is the weakest part of your games, and what did you do over the summer to shore it up?

DREW PETERSON: I could start. I still think another thing, it's something I worked on every year over my entire career, is getting bigger and stronger. Certain guys can -- especially as I went through the pre-draft process, and I'm competing against these NBA level guys, and you can tell how physical and big they are.

Especially when you go against these guys that are 28, 29, and up to 40 years old you're playing against, you can really see they've been working on their body for 25 years.

So the biggest thing I did was add another nine, ten pounds. I'm at 200 pounds now. It feels great. I feel better all around. Just another thing where I'm trying to take care of my body as much as possible.

BOOGIE ELLIS: For me probably was the thing that I work on in the summer was probably my decision-making. I watched a lot of film and learned like a bunch of little things. People think that when you're playing basketball, it's all about like big thing, but as a point guard, knowing like little things, little nuances and coming off the screen tighter, doing little things like that is really helping me and is going to help me take my next jump, I think.

Q. For both Drew and Boogie, what have you learned about this team through the preseason, getting to work with the freshmen for the first time here, and what kind of questions have you answered these last few weeks?

BOOGIE ELLIS: I definitely learned that I feel like we're one of the best shooting teams in the country.

DREW PETERSON: Yeah, I'd say kind of the change of style with having less -- you know, we had all those NBA bigs come through, and now we're a little more guard oriented. It's cool to see kind of the change of pace, and the freshmen came in, they're all ready to play.

It's impressive to see how Tre, Oziyah, and Kijani are all ready to contribute for the team. The smaller, faster paced lineups, a lot of shooting, it's going to be really a fun kind of new place I think we're going to get this year.

Q. Drew, how does your role change this year with those changing roster dynamics?

DREW PETERSON: Especially with Isaiah leaving, I'm trying to embrace a bigger role in the offense, defense, and leadership aspect of it too. I think that's a big thing of teaching the guys of what they need to do in certain spots and big games because most of these games, especially the big ones, come down to a few different plays.

Just making sure the guys are ready to go with that and trying to help in any way I can.

Q. Andy, with the impact that the transfer portal is now having on the game, how much room is left for that freshman who might need a year or two to develop?

ANDY ENFIELD: Our philosophy at USC is recruit freshmen, develop them, put them in a system to succeed, and let them have their chance.

This year we took no transfers. Last year we took one, we took Boogie. We lost Tahj Eaddy off our Elite Eight team, so we felt like we needed to go get a transfer, and fortunately Boogie was able to be a Trojan.

So we will take transfers only out of necessity. We hopefully will sign a few players in this November's recruiting class, but our younger guys deserve a chance. We recruit young men as freshmen. They want to play as freshmen. We have a few sophomores that are very good this year that were freshmen last year, and now they have a more expanded role. They'll be relied upon to help us win games.

At USC, we're probably one of the anomalies. We didn't take a single transfer this year, and we don't plan on doing it again next year. That's as long as players stay and don't leave early for the NBA Draft or unexpected transfers ourselves.

JESSE HOOKER: Thank you very much for being here and best of luck this season.

